

HEADLINE PERSONALITY

A 'Faceless' CIA Man Comes to the Fore

CPYRGHT By the Associated Press

After a long career in the Central Intelligence Agency, Robert W. Komer prefers to be "one of those faceless men who anonymously serve the President."

Tuesday, though, President Johnson raised him to a \$30,000-a-year White House job and gave him the title: "Special assistant to the President for peaceful reconstruction in Viet Nam."

By next Tuesday Komer, 44, an athletic six-footer who was a Harvard Phi Beta Kappa, will be off on his first reconnoitering mission to Viet Nam.

His fluency in French is among his assets for what Johnson characterized as a "now and very responsible assignment" involving the economic future of South Viet Nam.

Komer has been a specialist in Middle East and African — as well as South Asian — affairs and has worked closely in the foreign aid program.

Joined Kennedy

A serious, intense behind-the-scenes man with 14 years in the super-secret CIA, Komer came to the White House early in the administration of President John F. Kennedy as a liaison man and staff assistant for the high-level National Security Council. Later, he served as deputy to McGeorge Bundy, special assistant for national security affairs to both Kennedy and Johnson.

Now, with Bundy gone, President Johnson is reorganizing this area of his staff, and Komer has come to the fore.

A native of Chicago, he got his start in the intelligence branch of government when he trained at the Army Combat Intelligence School in World War II and served with Army intelligence in Italy.

He went to work for the CIA in 1947, right after earning his master's degree at Harvard's Graduate School of Business Administration.

Komer recalls he "first came to the attention" of Johnson



Full Name — Robert W. Komer.

CLAIM TO FAME—Special Assistant to the President for Peaceful Reconstruction in Viet Nam.

HOME—Lake Barcroft, Va.
AGE—44.

EDUCATION—Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Harvard; Also holds Master's degree from Harvard's Graduate School of Business Administration.

JOBS—14 years at CIA; staff assistant to National Security Council and Liaison Man for President Kennedy; Deputy to Special Assistant for National Security Affairs.

FAMILY—Wife, Geraldine. Children, Douglas, 16; Richard, 14, and Anne, 12.

HOBBIES — Swimming, tennis, sailing, ice skating.

when he was assigned by Kennedy to accompany the then vice president on a Middle East trip in 1962. Among Komer's duties were briefings for Johnson and his staff and helping to write speeches the vice president delivered along the way.

Known as "Rob" to close friends, Komer lives in Lake Barcroft in nearby Virginia, with his wife, the former Geraldine Peplin of Cleveland, and children by a former marriage, Douglas, 16; Richard, 14, and Anne, 12.

Lake Barcroft provides Komer with ready access to his favorite hobbies — swimming, tennis, sailing and ice skating. He and his wife try to get in a swim daily before work when the weather is warm.

Mrs. Komer, whom he married Nov. 3, 1961, is the daughter of a Cleveland manufacturer. She studied voice at Eastman School of Music, Rochester, N.Y., and for a while was a professional singer in light opera and musical shows.

It was while she was on the job as social director at a Miami Beach hotel in 1960 that she met Komer in the swimming pool.

She shares her husband's interest in cooking, but he is the real gourmet chief of the family — with a penchant for highly seasoned foods and a great love of Chinese delicacies, including Peking duck.

When he has time, he performs in the kitchen. "But nowadays," his wife laments, "he just has time to eat."

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